

# What's New in the MPDC

FEBRUARY 19, 2001

## BUCKLE UP OUR CHILDREN, DC!

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While National Child Passenger Safety Week is winding down, the MPDC reminds parents and other caregivers to properly secure every child passenger in a motor vehicle. It not only makes good safety sense – it's the law. In DC, child passengers up to the age of 3 must be secured in an approved child safety seat. Children ages 3-16, as well as all adults, must be in safety belts. Child safety seat violations in DC carry a \$55 fine and two points on the license of the person driving the vehicle at the time. Learn more about child passenger safety laws and resources in DC at:

<http://www.mpd.org/>

(click on Services and Programs, then select Project Safe Child)

*In addition to the District's permanent child safety seat fitting station at 1001 Half Street, SW, the MPDC's Second District offers safety seat inspections, by appointment, at its facility, 3320 Idaho Avenue, NW (call 202-359-4993). More details on the DC fitting stations and car seat loaner sites can be found at:*

<http://www.mpd.org/>  
(click on Services & Programs)

## HOMICIDES DOWN, OVERALL CRIME UP SLIGHTLY IN JANUARY

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*Official crime statistics for the year 2000 are still being tabulated. However, you can access crime trend data from 1990 to 1999 in the MPDC's 1999 Annual Report, available by calling 202-727-2663, or on the Web (in PDF format) at:*

<http://www.mpd.org/>  
(click on Publications)

Preliminary figures for January 2001 show that while overall crime was up slightly for the month, homicides were down 43 percent when compared with a year ago. The MPDC recorded 17 homicides in January 2001, compared with 30 murders for the same month a year ago. The number of serious crimes reported to police rose 2 percent in January. Decreases in homicide, sexual assault, aggravated assault, burglary and arson were offset by increases in robbery, theft and motor vehicle theft. Find preliminary January crime statistics for each of the seven police districts and the District as a whole at:

<http://www.mpd.org/> (click on Crime Statistics)

## CITYWIDE CRIME VICTIM SURVEY CONTINUES FOR ONE MORE WEEK

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A citywide survey of recent crime victims in DC is scheduled to continue for one more week. Begun on Feb. 5, the telephone survey is designed to help police better understand the needs of crime victims in DC and measure their satisfaction with police services. Police recruits conducting the survey are scheduled to contact approximately 1,000 people who were the victims of robbery, assault, burglary, auto theft and arson during the months of November and December, 2000. (Because of the sensitive nature of homicide, sexual assault and domestic violence, the MPDC will be conducting a special survey with victims and survivors of these crimes.) Learn more about the survey at:

*Even if you are not part of the victim survey, the MPDC wants to hear your ideas or suggestions on how we can improve services to victims of crime. Please call Debra Hoffmaster in the MPDC Office of Organizational Development at 202-727-8726, or e-mail her at:*  
[dhoffmas@mpdc.org](mailto:dhoffmas@mpdc.org)

<http://www.mpd.org/> (click on News, news release dated 2/1/01)

## CHIEF RAMSEY CREDITS GOOD POLICE WORK, COMMUNITY HELP IN SOLVING GALLAUDET HOMICIDES

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With Tuesday's arrest of 20-year-old freshman Joseph Mafnas Mesa Jr., the MPDC officially closed the recent homicides of two Gallaudet University students. Mesa is charged with two counts of felony murder in the September 2000 slaying of Eric Plunkett and the February 2001 homicide of Benjamin Varner. Chief Ramsey credited solid police work and extraordinary cooperation from the entire Gallaudet community for helping to close these two high-profile crimes. Ramsey praised the work of Fifth District investigators, the Major Case Squad, the Mobile Crime Unit and others for their vigorous and professional work on the two cases. The Chief said, "I am extremely proud of the men and women who worked tirelessly on this case, and we are very fortunate to have had the cooperation of the students, faculty and staff of Gallaudet University." Read more about the arrest and the homicides at:

<http://www.mpdc.org/> (click on News)

*In an attempt to generate fresh leads in all unsolved homicides, the MPDC is currently offering a \$10,000 reward to anyone who provides information that leads to the arrest and conviction of the person or persons responsible for any murder committed in DC. To learn about recent unsolved homicides, check the News page on the MPDC Web site:*

<http://www.mpdc.org/>  
(click on News)

## "PARTNERSHIPS FOR PROBLEM SOLVING" TRAINING FOR THE COMMUNITY CONTINUES

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Recognizing that community policing requires an active and informed community, the MPDC has launched a citywide program that is training members of the community in community policing. Called "Partnerships for Problem Solving," this unique effort brings together police officers, residents and other stakeholders in each Police Service Area (PSA). These partners receive specialized training in how to identify, analyze and solve neighborhood crime and disorder problems using a five-step problem-solving process. "Partnerships for Problem Solving" was pilot-tested in the summer of 1999 in six PSAs. The program has since been expanded to dozens of other communities, with each PSA scheduled to go through at least one training series. To find out more about recent or upcoming training in your community, call the MPDC's Community Partnership Section at 202-727-1585. For general information about "Partnerships for Problem Solving," go to:

*Don't know what police district or PSA you live in? Check out the "PSA Finder" on the MPDC Web site:*

<http://www.mpdc.org/>  
(click on Districts & PSAs)

<http://www.mpdc.org/> (click on Services & Programs)

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*Information, ideas or comments about this service?*

*E-mail Kevin Morison, MPDC's Director of Corporate Communications, at [kmorison\\_mpdc@excite.com](mailto:kmorison_mpdc@excite.com).*

*Would you like to have this information emailed to you? Just go to our web site and register with [crimereports.com](http://www.crimereports.com).*

**METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT WEB PAGE**  
**[HTTP://WWW.MPDC.ORG](http://www.mpdc.org)**